

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Predicting College Students' Intention to Graduate:

A Test of the Theory of Planned Behavior

STUDENT: Nate Sutter

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

COLLEGE: Teachers College

DATE: July, 2014

PAGES: 126

With approximately half of incoming undergraduates obtaining a degree within four to six years since enrollment, the proposed study examined whether it is possible to increase graduation rates with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The TPB states individuals are influenced to perform a behavior based on their attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived abilities. The greater these influences and individuals' motivation to comply with each, the more likely the behavior will be performed. Moreover, three research questions were examined: (1) Can the TPB predict undergraduates' graduation intention? (2) Does graduation intention differ by students' year of enrollment? (3) Can the TPB predict transfer students' graduation intention? Results indicated that although the TPB variables predict graduation intention, students' year of enrollment does not significantly affect their attitudes, perceived norms, perceived control and intention to graduate. These findings were discussed in relation to possible intervention programs college officials could utilize to increase their graduation rates.